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10/656,888

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Jukka-Pekka Vihmalo

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WARE FRESSOLA VAN DER SLUYS & ADOLPHSON, LLP
BRADFORD GREEN, BUILDING 5
755 MAIN STREET, P O BOX 224
MONROE, CT 06468

EXAMINER

VO, THANH DUC

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

2189

MAIL DATE

DELIVERY MODE

10/31/2007

PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/656,888

Applicant(s)

VIHMALO ET AL.

Examiner

Thanh D. Vo

Art Unit

2189

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 17 August 2007.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-10, 14, 15, 17-33, 36 and 37 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-10, 14, 15, 17-33, 36 and 37 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Response to Amendment

1. This Office Action is responsive to the Amendment filed on August 17, 2007. Claims 1, 20, and 32 are amended. Claims 1-10, 14, 15, 17-33, 36, and 37 are presented for examination. Claims 1-10, 14, 15, 17-33, 36, and 37 are pending.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

2. Claims 1-37 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the enablement requirement. The claim(s) contains subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to enable one skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and/or use the invention.

As per claim 1, on the first indentation, the claim discloses "wherein said triggering signal comprises an event for multi-block memory activities but is not intended for memory wear leveling". On the last indentation, the claim discloses "wherein said triggering signal is for implementing both said event and said memory wear leveling".

Two of the limitations cited are contradicting each other in many ways. First, in the first recitation Applicant claims "the triggering signal is comprising an event for multi-block memory activities" but later in the second recitation Applicant claims "the

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triggering signal is for implementing said event". Noted the difference meaning between "comprising" and "implementing". Second, in the first recitation Applicant claims "the triggering signal is not intended for memory wear leveling" but later in the second recitation Applicant claims "the triggering signal is for implementing said memory wear leveling".

The subject matter as being claimed above was not described in the specification on how the two conditions/limitations can be coexist such that the triggering signal comprises an event for memory activities, however, the triggering signal is for implementing the event. In addition, the specification further failed to describe how a triggering signal is not intended for memory wear leveling and at the same time is used to implement the memory wear leveling.

Claims 20 and 32 are also rejected under the same rationale of claim 1.

For the reason set forth, claims 1, 20, and 32 contain subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way to enable one skilled in the art to which it pertains to make and/or use the invention.

All dependent claims are rejected as having the same deficiencies as the claims they depend from.

Appropriate correction is required.

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

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3. Claims 1, 20, and 32 recite the limitation "memory leveling" in the last indentation of each claim. There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim.

All dependent claims are rejected as having the same deficiencies as the claims they depend from.

Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

4. Claim 1-3, 5-15, 19-33, 36, and 37 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Chang et al. (US Pub 2004/0177212) in view of Ban (US Patent 6,732,221).

With respect to independent claims 1, 20, and 32:

As per claim 1, Chang disclosed a method comprising the steps of:

detecting an at least one triggering signal (Fig. 3, item 304) by a multi-block memory containing data, usable in multi-block memory activities (Fig. 1a item 174 and Fig. 5a) but is not intended for memory wear leveling (paragraph 0063, lines 15-22, wherein the initialization signal is to trigger the system but there is nowhere that it is using for memory wear leveling); and

copying or relocating the data of an at least one first memory block containing an at least one memory element of the multi-block memory to an at least one second memory block of the multi-block memory after detecting the at least one triggering signal every time said at least one triggering signal, wherein said at least one second memory block does not contain said data before said copying or relocating (Fig. 4, item 420, Fig. 6, item 612, and page 8, paragraph 0078, lines 1-7);

wherein said at least one second memory block does not contain said data before said copying or relocating is an inherent feature of Chang since "said data" does not exist in "the second block", otherwise it would be redundant and inefficient to copy or relocate "said data" from "the first block" to "the second block" in Chang.

As per claims 20 and 32, Chang disclosed a multi-block memory containing data, usable in multi-block memory activities (See Fig. 1b, item 11);

a memory pointer controller (Fig. 1a, item 128), responsive to the update signal (Fig. 1a, item 130, and Fig. 3, item 304), wherein interface 130 will inherently comprising data signaling to memory controller 128;

a memory wear controller (Fig. 1b, item 128), responsive to a triggering signal (Fig. 1a, item 130) or to a further triggering signal (Fig. 1b, item 15) comprises an event for multi-block memory activities but is not intended for memory wear leveling, for providing a data-relocation signal (Fig. 1b, item 17) to the multi-block memory (Fig. 1b, item 11) to relocate the data from an at least one first memory block containing an at least one memory element of the multi-block memory to an at least one second

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memory block of the multi-block memory(Fig. 4, item 420, Fig. 6, item 612, and page 8, paragraph 0078, lines 1-7);

wherein said at least one second memory block does not contain said data before said copying or relocating is an inherent feature of Chang since "said data" does not existed in "the second block", otherwise it would be redundant and inefficient to copy or relocate "said data" from "the first block" to "the second block" in Chang.

As per claims 1, 20, and 32, Chang did not explicitly teach wherein no information on a usage of said at least one first memory block, at least one second memory block or at least one memory element is provided for performing said copying or relocating for said memory wear leveling.

However, Ban discloses a random process of a flash data manager to enhance the wear leveling of a flash memory. See col. 5, lines 29-39, wherein the method of moving memory content from one location to another is randomly assigned and there is no usage information provided for performing such memory allocation and relocation.

It would have been obvious to one having an ordinary skill in the art at the time of the Applicant's invention to combine the method of Chang with the method Ban in order to arrive at the current invention. The motivation of doing so is to provide a methodology for improving wear leveling for all units, including static units, in a Flash devices, with a substantially decrease in required system resources as taught by Ban at col. 6, lines 28-31.

With respect to claims 2, 3, 5-15, 19, 21-31, 33, 36, and 37:

As per claims 2, 5, 28, and 29, Chang et al. disclosed a method, wherein each of the at least one first memory block and the at least one second memory block contains only one memory element (claims 2 and 28) or contains more than one memory element (claims 5 and 29). See paragraph 0008, wherein a block is generally a storage element contain at least one memory page and a block will comprise only one page (one storage element) if the page size is equal to the block size;

wherein said at least one second memory block does not contain said data before said copying or relocating is an inherent feature of Chang since "said data" does not existed in "the second block", otherwise it would be redundant and inefficient to copy or relocate "said data" from "the first block" to "the second block" in Chang et al.

As per claims 3, 19, 23, and 33, the method of updating a first memory pointer originally pointed to the at least one second memory block before said copying or relocating to point to the at least one first memory block after said copying or relocating is an inherent feature in Chang since updating a memory pointer to be pointed to a new data location after the data was moved is required in the computer art in order to avoid data being misallocated and taking up the unnecessary storage are.

As per claim 6, Chang disclosed a wherein the data of an at least one additional block of the multi-block memory is relocated to an at least one further additional block

of the multi-block memory after detecting the at least one triggering signal. See Fig. 4, item 420, Fig. 6, item 612, and page 8, paragraph 0078, lines 1-7.

wherein said at least one second memory block does not contain said data before said copying or relocating is an inherent feature of Chang since "said data" does not exist in "the second block", otherwise it would be redundant and inefficient to copy or relocate "said data" from "the first block" to "the second block" in Chang.

As per claims 7 and 21, Chang disclosed a method, wherein said copying or relocating is performed according to predetermined criteria. See Fig. 4, wherein the copying is performing at a predetermined algorithm according to the flow chart.

As per claim 10, Chang disclosed a method, wherein said copying or relocating of the data occurs only after detecting a predetermined number of the at least one triggering signal. See Fig. 4, item 408, wherein the copying is occurred after determined that erase count is low compared to the average. The number of triggering signal is equivalent to the number of erasure triggered by the number of access request.

As per claims 14, 36, and 37, Chang discloses wherein said event for said multi-block memory activities is at least one of:

a) a write operation (Fig. 3, item 340, wherein storing is equivalent to write operation), b) a read operation (Fig. 3, item 306, wherein the obtaining after the initialization request is equivalent to the read operation); c) a clock pulse is an inherent

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feature in the computer art at the hardware level wherein the falling edge pulse or the rising edge clock pulse will trigger a predetermined operation which would have been programmed by those skilled in the art in order to synchronize the all of the components and the operation of a computer to work together and maintaining the data and time, d) a counter to count the number of operation (See Fig. 4, erasure counter)

As per claim 15, Chang disclosed a method, wherein said copying or relocating of the data occurs a predetermined number of times between the triggering signals. See Fig. 4, wherein the triggering signal is equivalent to the number of triggering signals from the erasure trigger and the memory blocks are being relocated after a predetermined number of erasure counts.

As per claim 22, Chang disclosed an electronic device, wherein the memory pointer signal contains a physical address (Fig. 5a, mapping table 462 with physical block address) in the multi-block memory to be accessed for enabling an at least one further data relocation of the data located at the physical address and optionally an address of a first memory pointer. See Fig. 4, item 420, Fig. 6, item 612, and page 8, paragraph 0078.

As per claim 24, Chang disclosed an electronic device, wherein the memory wear controller and the memory pointer controller are implemented as a combination of

software and hardware components. See paragraph 0048, lines 9-11 and paragraph 0056, lines 1-7, wherein the software is executed by microprocessor.

As per claim 25, Chang disclosed an electronic device, wherein the memory wear controller and the memory pointer controller are implemented as hardware. See page 4, paragraph 0049, lines last sentence, wherein the microprocessor as an hardware implemented to execute and control the memory control system.

As per claim 26, Chang disclosed an electronic device, wherein the hardware is implemented using a finite state machine. See page 5, paragraph 0051, lines 4-5, wherein the finite state machine is implemented in the memory control system.

As per claim 27, Chang disclosed an electronic device, wherein the memory wear controller and the memory pointer controller are implemented as software. See page 5, paragraph 0056, lines 4-6, wherein the software/code enable the memory to be addressed, read, or stored into.

As per claim 30, Chang disclosed an electronic device, wherein said copying or relocating of the data from the at least one first memory block and updating the location of the memory pointers are performed according to predetermined criteria. See Fig. 4, wherein the copying is performing at a predetermined algorithm according to the flow chart.

As per claim 31, a triggering detector responsive to a triggering signal is an inherent feature in the computer art since signal triggering is required in order to enable the communication between the circuit components such as processor, memory, and memory controller.

5. Claim 17 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Chang et al. (US Pub 2004/0177212) and Ban (US Patent 6,732,221) and further in view of Khalid et al. (US Pub 2003/0012661).

As per claim 17, Chang et al. and Ban did not explicitly disclose a method, wherein all the data contained in the multi-block memory is copied or relocated at the same time.

Khalid et al. discloses a method of writing the data into the memory block at the same time. See paragraph 0008, lines 2-7.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having an ordinary skill in the art at the time of the Applicant's invention to combine the method of Change et al. and Ban with the method of Khalid et al. in order to arrive at the current invention since it will further benefit the wear leveling strategies of memory cells as taught by Khalid et al. on paragraph 0036, lines 1-4.

Response to Arguments

6. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1, 20, and 32 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection necessitated by Applicant's amendment.

In response to the arguments presented by Examiner on the Office Action of July 12, 2007, Applicant points to item 26 on Fig. 3 to the present invention to indicate that the triggering signal is for performing read and write operations, or "performed as normal" (See Remarks). Examiner respectfully disagrees, figure 3 does not show any evidence that the triggering signal is performing those operations. Much less, the description of Fig. 3 in the specification discloses: "A triggering event causes the triggering signal 26 to be activated. Such a triggering event can be a read or write operation or a clock pulse". Therefore, a read or write operation or a clock pulse can activate the triggering signal 26.

Conclusion

Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not

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mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Thanh D. Vo whose telephone number is (571) 272-0708. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 9AM-5:30PM.

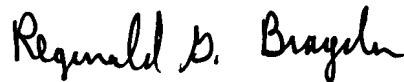
If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Reginald G. Bragdon can be reached on (571) 272-4204. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.



Thanh Vo
Patent Examiner
AU 2189
10/17/2007



REGINALD BRAGDON
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 2100